(b) if so, the details thereof and the decision taken by the Union Government thereon; and

(c) if no decision has been taken, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA): (a) Yes, Sir. A proposal on High Resolution Aero-Magnetic Survey as part of an integrated study for the exploration and management of ground water resources in the State of Orissa was submitted by Crown Technical Services Private Limited to the Government of Orissa.

(b) and (c) According to the approved proposal, an area of 21,500 sq. km. would be covered at an estimated cost of Rs. 3.3 crores. Of the project cost, 80% is to be covered by Australian assistance under grant and loan, while 20% of the cost is to be borne by the Government of Orissa. Phase-I would be completed in 18 months tentatively beginning October, 1991.

The proposal has been posed for assistance to the Government of Australia.

Phase-II would be taken up only after review of performance under Phase-I.

Establishment of Irrigation Finance Corporation

606. SHRI PRAKASH BAPU VASANTRAO PATIL: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the proposal for the establishment of an Irrigation Finance Corporation to provide funds in the form of loans for the expeditious completion of the nationally important large irrigation projects has since been chalked out; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA): (a) and (b) The proposal for setting up of an Irrigation Finance Corporation was recommended by the Working Group on Major and Medium Irrigation Programme for inclusion in the VIIIth Plan. The proposal is to provide resources by the Central Government for the Corporation in shape of equity and loans. Further, the Corporation would be given authority to raise resources from domestic and international financial agencies as well as market borrowings. The Planning Commission, however, did not favour the setting up of the Corporation. As an alternative, it has been proposed to undertake a scheme for providing special assistance for the expeditious completion of Nationally Important Irrigation Projects.

Irrigation Projects under Construction

607. SHRI PRAKASH BAPU VASANTRAO PATIL: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) the number of major and medium irrigation projects in the country which are under construction as on June, 1991;

(b) whether some of these projects are running behind the schedule resulting in cost-escalation of these projects; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA): (a) 167 major and 287 medium approved as well as unapproved projects are under construction as in June, 1991.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

[*Translation*]

Telephone Connections from M.Ps Quota

608. SHRI UPENDRA NATH VERMA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state: